The rationale of the Green Morocco Plan: Missing links between goals and implementation

Nicolas Faysse[a,b]

[a] G-Eau Research Unit, Cirad, Montpellier, France; [b] National College of Agriculture, Meknes, Morocco

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Summary

Morocco began an ambitious agricultural policy called the Green Morocco Plan in 2008. This paper analyses the rationale behind the plan, i.e., the overall consistency between: (i) the initial assessment of the agricultural sector; (ii) the goals defined for the plan; and (iii) the instruments used to achieve these goals. The analysis is based on a review of policy documents and instruments implemented in the framework of the Plan. The original assessment, which was conducted to frame the Plan, highlighted a dual agricultural sector with traditional and modern farms. The key goals of the Green Morocco Plan are to increase agricultural production and farm income, and to ensure the sustainable development of rural territories. The rationale of the Plan is that, to achieve these goals, public actions should break away from the dual structure of the sector, support investments, and improve the organization of agricultural value chains. However, this paper shows that the farm typology outlined in the original assessment was in fact inaccurate, and that, in practice, the Plan does not take the diversity of farms into account. Moreover, most of the instruments designed to improve the organization of agricultural value chains do not give importance to the share of the value added that benefits farmers, and most of the instruments of the plan do not take the territorial level into account. As a result, the aim of the Green Morocco Plan is to transform rural areas through improved economic performance but, due to inaccuracies in its rationale, its focus is generally limited to enhancing agricultural production.

Keywords: agricultural policy; development project; farm typology; Morocco

Introduction

In Morocco, from Independence in 1956 to the early 1980s, public policies gave high priority to agricultural development. From 1985 onwards, the Moroccan state introduced a structural adjustment policy in the agricultural sector that reduced its involvement in agricultural activities (Akesbi, 2006). This period lasted until 2008, when the Green Morocco Plan (GMP) was enacted. The

GMP heralded a strong come-back of the state via both an ambitious strategy and increased resources. The investment budget of the Moroccan Department of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries (DoA) almost tripled with the implementation of the GMP (Akesbi, 2012). Scheduled to continue until 2020, the GMP has become an overarching policy encompassing all DoA agricultural actions. However at the time, the DoA did not provide a detailed account of the rationale behind the policy. A series of slides was the only document released when the GMP was announced (DoA, 2008), and since then only a small number of policy documents have been published. Despite the lack of policy documents, the GMP has implemented initiatives: by late 2011, 436 agricultural development projects had been designed (Agricultural Development Agency, 2012) and in 2014, several policies related to the agricultural sector had been reformed (e.g., on extension). The GMP has therefore been in effect long enough to analyse the link between the goals officially set for the GMP and the actions undertaken.

In this paper, we analyse the GMP rationale, here understood to be the overall consistency between: (i) the original assessment of the agricultural sector; (ii) the goals laid down in the Plan; and (iii) the actions undertaken to achieve these goals. We assess the key policy documents and analyse the actions undertaken in the framework of the GMP. We compare the GMP with past agricultural policies in Morocco and we identify the innovative components of the Plan and those borrowed from past policies. However, we do not provide a quantitative assessment of the GMP implementation at the national scale (for which details can be found in the DoA 2010 report).

The paper is organized as follows: In the first section, we briefly summarize past agricultural policies in Morocco. In section 2, we describe the initial GMP assessment of the agricultural sector, and in section 3, the goals of the GMP and its main strategies. In section 4, we describe the main instruments used in the GMP, how they were defined, and how they are used in practice. In the final section, we discuss the inaccuracies in the GMP rationale and their consequences.

Past agricultural policies in Morocco

In this section, we describe the key features of the agricultural policies implemented in Morocco since independence and compare them with those of the GMP (for a detailed analysis of Moroccan agricultural policies, see Akesbi, 2006, and Bouzidi, 2012). During the period from Independence to the mid-1980s, the state was actively involved in the agricultural sector. The state enacted a series of national and regional agricultural development plans (e.g. on dairy and sugar production) to meet ambitious objectives in terms of production capacities and quantities of agricultural products. To reach the objective of establishing irrigation schemes covering an area of one million hectares, King Hassan II planned to build dams and irrigation schemes throughout the country (Swearingen, 1988). In particular, the state continued building large-scale irrigation schemes managed by public offices, a policy which was introduced during the period Morocco was a French Protectorate. From the 1970s on, the state created agrarian reform cooperatives in both irrigated and rainfed areas. The Western Rif Mountains project (1965-1980) and the Middle Atlas Central Area project (1982-1987) were emblematic of this period. They focused on increasing agricultural production by planting trees, improving production infrastructure (e.g., hydraulic equipment) and protecting production areas (e.g., by controlling erosion). Both projects were top-down. The Middle Atlas Central Area project officially aimed to involve farmers' groups in the management of pastoral areas, but its top-down approach failed to achieve the intended goals (Bekkari, 2009; Boujrouf, 1996).

During the same period, there was considerable discussion related to the characteristics of small-scale farming and how to ensure its sustainability (Bouderbala et al., 1977). In large-scale irrigation schemes and agrarian reform cooperatives, the Moroccan state attempted to control internal management of individual farms to ensure their economic viability. In agrarian cooperatives and in most large-scale irrigation schemes, the state drew up models of small-scale farms in which modern equipment (tractors, etc.) and intensive farming practices (e.g., use of purebred cows) would be used. Farmers could only grow crops approved by the DoA in most of their fields. These compulsory cropping patterns were also designed to ensure that regional production objectives were met (Bouzidi, 2012). Farms in agrarian reform cooperatives could not be divided up among the children after the death of the farmer. Instead, one of the family members was chosen to take over the whole farm to ensure that the farm would still be big enough to be economically viable. In the 1980s, with the introduction of structural adjustment policies (Davis, 2006), these interventionist policies were dismantled and from then on, the Moroccan state made many fewer attempts to intervene directly in agricultural value chains[1]. In the early 2000s, the DoA started drawing up contracts with associations of farmers at the national level so that these associations could undertake a series of agreed-upon actions (Desrues, 2005).

In 1999, the 2020 Rural Development Strategy was enacted to eliminate rural poverty by 2020. The aim of this strategy was to shift from the productivist orientation of past agricultural policies to a multi-dimensional approach to rural development (Lazarev, 2012). The strategy underlined the importance of the participation of rural inhabitants and called for their involvement in the design and implementation of development actions (Moroccan Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, 1999, p. 181). In 2000, a second strategy, named the Strategy for the Development of Moroccan Agriculture, was drawn up, which called for the involvement of farmers in the decision making (Desrues, 2004a). However, neither strategy was ever applied (Akesbi, 2006).

The original assessment of the Green Morocco Plan

In 2008, an assessment was conducted as a starting point for designing the GMP. However, some of the data used for this assessment was outdated as it dated from the most recent general agricultural census in 1996. In 1996, there were 1,500,000 farms in Morocco, 70% of which were smaller than 5 ha and 94.6% had no permanent work force (Akesbi et al., 2008). Based on these data, the assessment stated that a clear demarcation line could be drawn between two groups of farms. For instance, the General Council for Agricultural Development – a public think tank within the DoA in charge of monitoring changes in the agricultural sector and analysing policies – referred to the 'strong dualism between a modern sector and a traditional one' (General Council for Agricultural Development, 2009a, p. 21).

According to the Agricultural Development Agency (ADA), a body specifically created in 2009 to coordinate implementation of the GMP, the modern sector, characterised by high productivity and the use of modern techniques, represents 20% of the total cultivated area (ADA, 2014). According to

1. An agricultural value chain is the set of actors involved in the production, processing and marketing of an agricultural commodity.

the same document, the modern agricultural sector accounts for 150,000 farms located in irrigated areas and favourable rainfed areas[2]. According to the same document, the traditional sector comprises 1,350,000 farms and corresponds to 'traditional food-producing agriculture located in unfavourable rainfed areas, mountain areas and oases'. It accounts for 80% of the total farmed area (ADA, 2014). The General Council for Agricultural Development (2009a) considers that the traditional sector can be further subdivided into 750,000 small and medium farms, and 600,000 micro-farms. This farm typology combines criteria at the territorial level (e.g. the location of the farm in an irrigated or favourable rainfed area) and criteria at the farm level (e.g. production techniques). Unfortunately, the typology is not accurate. In particular, there are many small-scale farms located in irrigated areas (Kuper et al., 2012). Among them, low productivity and profitability hamper the success of many dairy farms, due to nutritionally unbalanced feed (Sraïri et al., 2009).

In addition to the dual nature of the agricultural sector, the initial assessment undertaken for the GMP identified the same key challenges as those addressed for the formulation of past agricultural policies in Morocco. It lists three constraints: the low investment capacity of small-scale farms, the complex land status, and field fragmentation (DoA, 2008). These three constraints were already identified in past agricultural policies in Morocco (e.g. the 5-year investment plan published in 1960) (Bouderbala et al., 1977).

The goals and overall strategy of the GMP

The primary objective of the GMP is for agriculture to become the main lever for Morocco's economic growth in the next 10 to 15 years within a sustainable rural development framework (ADA, 2014; DoA, 2008; General Council for Agricultural Development, 2009b). In particular, the plan aims to increase agricultural exports and the competitiveness of Moroccan agriculture on the international scene. The Moroccan government seeks to integrate its agricultural sector in the world market (DoA, 2008) so as to benefit from the free trade agreements signed in the 2000s (Desrues, 2004b).

To achieve this objective, the GMP aims to 'move away from a dual agricultural economy' (General Council for Agricultural Development, 2009a, p. 22). The DoA thus aims for the new agricultural strategy to 'break away from the traditional paradigm which opposes a modern sector and a social one' (DoA, 2014a). To overcome this dualism, the GMP aims to create agricultural enterprises in both favourable and unfavourable areas. 'After the phase of [developing] one million irrigated hectares, which was the main characterisation of agricultural policies since independence, the objective is now [to create] one million agricultural enterprises' (General Council for Agricultural Development, 2009a, p. 28). By the same token, the DoA seeks to achieve the 'professionalisation' of small and medium farms, i.e., to shift from a risk-averse strategy of conservation of farm assets towards a growth-based strategy involving investing and taking risks in order to increase incomes (ibid, p. 39-40). However, the DoA document provides no clear definition of 'professional' or of an 'agricultural enterprise'.

2. A 'favourable rainfed area' is an area where there is sufficient rainfall to grow many different crops without irrigation. In Morocco, this corresponds to average rainfall of more than 400 mm per year (General Council for Agricultural Development, 2009b).

Therefore, it does not explain why many Moroccan farms cannot be already considered as enterprises.

The GMP identified the same obstacles to the development of the agricultural sector that had already been identified in previous studies, but this time, it tried to find innovative ways of overcoming them. Rather than attempting to change the land status or be directly involved in farm management with the aim of creating new farming models, it chooses to focus on agricultural value chains and to identify stakeholders with the capacity to become leaders to coordinate the development of the chains, and especially to support small-scale farms. The Plan thus views the agricultural sector as a set of value chains. In contrast with past policies, the aim of the GMP is to help farmers specialise. This is currently thought to be a key condition for farmers to improve their productivity.

The GMP also reflects a change in the general stance of the state. First, the GMP formalises the separation between agriculture as an economic sector and rural development. Before 2008, the Ministry of Agriculture was also in charge of rural development. In 2008, with the implementation of the GMP, rural development was removed from its responsibilities. The GMP orientation towards economic growth is therefore the opposite of that expressed in the 2020 Rural Development Strategy, which suggests including the agricultural sector in a broader frame of integrated rural development. Second, the GMP considers that it is being implemented in a context in which the role of the Moroccan state has changed since the wave of privatisations in the 1990s (Najem, 2001). The GMP is part of a general trend of Moroccan policies to promote economic liberalisation and to establish a market-based economy (Zemni and Bogaert, 2009). For instance, the GMP considers that, while the state can support the reinforcement of the organizational setting of agricultural value chains, its role is not to interfere in the daily management of a value chain once the organizational setting is considered satisfactory. However, indirectly, it does intervene in these chains, since it draws up contracts with members of the chains

In 2008, the DoA defined the main goals of the GMP and the instruments to be used. Thereafter, the DoA produced regional agricultural plans, which established the quantitative production objectives to be achieved (per crop or animal) by 2020. These regional plans also listed a series of projects to be financed. They were drawn up by the DoA staff with almost no input from farmers. As repeatedly emphasised in DoA policy documents: ‘No value chain is condemned, all can and must succeed’ (DoA, 2014a). In contrast to policies in the 1970s and 1980s, the GMP did not define objectives in terms of the development of farms and did not plan state interventions in internal farm management. In the regional agricultural plans, farms are mostly referred to as a means of achieving increased agricultural production.

Instruments for the implementation of the GMP

New instruments were designed for the GMP implementation. Most come under Pillar I and Pillar II. These instruments are completed by a series of transversal actions.

Pillar I

The assumption that the state should not be involved in the daily management of any value chain is clearly emphasized in Pillar I. Pillar I actions are implemented in cases where a private actor has the capability of coordinating an agricultural value chain. In such a situation, the DoA mainly acts by

drawing up a contract with the actor concerned. Pillar I is implemented through two types of actions: contract programmes and aggregation projects. In the case of major value chains (e.g., the dairy or sugar sector), a contract programme is drawn up between the DoA and the interprofessional organisation, i.e., an organisation which includes all the actors of a given value chain (Bensaid, 2011). In 2011, a law was enacted to provide a formal status for inter-professional organisations and 16 contract programmes were signed in the same year. The contracts list a series of actions to improve the organization, production, and productivity of the value chains over a period of 7-10 years. Each contract defines the responsibilities of the actors of the chain and those of the state in carrying out the planned actions.

An aggregation project means that an actor of an agricultural value chain takes responsibility for supporting the production of a group of farmers and for purchasing their products. The aggregation concept is not new in Morocco. Dairy and sugar agricultural value chains have been functioning in this way for the past 40 years (Faysse et al., 2010). In 2012, a law was enacted to define the status of aggregators. An aggregator is usually an investor-owned agro-industry, and in rare cases, a farmers' cooperative. Aggregators are supposed to provide the bulk of the funds to be invested in Pillar I projects (e.g., by building a dairy processing plant or a packaging unit). Aggregators receive subsidies from the DoA to provide technical advice, credit, and inputs to farmers, to make offers to purchase farm products, and to invest in the processing of agricultural products. In 2012, the ADA validated 111 Pillar I aggregation projects, which amounted to an overall budget of 75,000 million Moroccan Dirhams (approximately 6,700 million Euros), including both public and private investment (ADA, 2012).

Pillar II

Pillar II mainly concerns 'harsh areas' (mountains, oases, plains and plateaus in semi-arid regions), which actually account for the bulk of farming in Morocco, and are among the poorest. It aims to 'substantially increase the incomes of 500,000 to 600,000 farms in the next 10 years' (General Council for Agricultural Development, 2009a, p. 19). The DoA (2014b) and the General Council for Agricultural Development (2009a) consider that Pillar II is based on 'solidarity' in the sense that the state takes into account the social importance of marginalized and poor rural areas and wants them to benefit from public funding. An ADA precondition for funding a Pillar II project is that beneficiaries are 'poor and/or vulnerable' and that farmers do not have sufficient capital to fund the project themselves (Bensaid, 2011). The introductory section of all GMP regional agricultural plans clearly states that Pillar II projects are geared towards increasing farm income. Pillar II projects are based on the assumption that in marginal areas a limited number of investors are interested in investing in small-scale agriculture. Therefore, Pillar II projects do not involve private investors but are developed in coordination with one or several existing farmers' organisations e.g., milk collection cooperatives (Faysse et al., 2010), or with organizations specifically created for the occasion.

By the end of 2011, the ADA had validated 325 Pillar II projects, which amounted to a total of 10,400 million Moroccan dirhams (approximately 930 million euros) in public funding (ADA, 2012). Most Pillar II projects included one component focused on increasing production, and another on improving the marketing capacities of farmers' organisations. For instance, one project involved planting olive trees and supplying a modern olive oil press to three farmers' associations (Faysse et al., 2014). Out of the 325 projects validated by the ADA at the end of 2011, 225 were in the implementation or operational stage: 64% focused on fruit and vegetable production (olive, almonds,

dates and other fruits), 33% on livestock production (mainly beef) and bee keeping, and 3% were projects concerning various agricultural commodities (Benzina, 2012). The design and implementation of all orchard-based Pillar II projects are similar. A firm is contracted to plant the seedlings and care for them for two years. The farmers take over responsibility for the young trees only after this period. Some Pillar II projects provide support for the development of an economic activity for landless rural inhabitants, e.g., projects for bee keeping or drying plums.

When several farmers' organizations in the same region produce the same product, they are encouraged to join forces in an economic interest group. The DoA then designs Pillar II projects with these economic interest groups, who, in turn, are expected to take responsibility for the marketing and possibly the processing of agricultural products. The creation of these groups is also a way to bolster a local actor who has the potential to take the lead in organising and improving the performance of a value chain.

In 2014, many Pillar II projects were already up and running. Some were a good catalyser for farmers' collective action, for example when the farmers set up a joint marketing project for their products (Sebgui, 2014; Thomas, 2013). Other Pillar II projects only concerned tree planting, and many questions were raised about the way the firm planted and cared for the seedlings. Several farmers' organizations that were specifically created for the purpose of Pillar II projects, only had limited activities during the project implementation stage and some stopped functioning altogether when the implementation stage ended (Faysse et al., 2014; Faysse et al., unpublished data).

Differentiating the two pillars

The GMP documents define three main criteria to distinguish between Pillar I and Pillar II projects. The first criterion is the geographical location of the planned project: Pillar I projects are designed for areas with intensive farming practices (e.g., irrigated areas in the plains). Pillar II projects primarily target areas with extensive farming practices (e.g., mountainous areas). The second criterion refers to farm characteristics: Pillar II projects focus mainly on small-scale farms. The third criterion is the source of funding. Whereas Pillar I projects receive most investment funds from the private sector, Pillar II projects receive subsidies mainly from the State.

However, these criteria do not completely overlap. As mentioned above, there are many small-scale farms in the irrigated areas in the plains. Moreover, many small-scale farmers are involved in Pillar I contracts, in the sugar or dairy sector for instance. In addition, several farms more than 10 ha in size have benefited from Pillar II projects (Thomas, 2013). In practice, the way the staff at the provincial offices of the DoA distinguish between the two pillars is that a Pillar I project is based on the definition of a contract with an aggregator, while Pillar II projects are designed in cooperation with one or several farmers' cooperatives or associations. Consequently, the distinction between different types of farms in the initial GMP assessment is not actually applied in the implementation of GMP actions.

Akesbi (2012) considers that, given the clear distinction between the two pillars, the dual view, which separates small-scale and large-scale farms, is still at the core of the GMP. However, there are two reasons to consider that the two pillars are not based on a dual vision of Moroccan agriculture. First, as argued above, both pillars include small-scale farms. Second, several traits are shared by the two pillars: (i) both assume that the lack of investment is the main obstacle to agricultural development;

(ii) both aim to organize agricultural value chains and seek to contract with an economic actor (an aggregator or an economic interest group) capable of coordinating the actors of the chains; (iii) both aim to improve small-scale farmers' capacity to produce high-quality products and access markets. In this way, the GMP is indeed attempting to move away from the current dualism of Moroccan agriculture in the sense that both pillars support a shift from two currently different types of farms towards a common farming model.

Transversal instruments

The GMP also created transversal instruments or strengthened existing ones. These instruments include a review of collective land tenure, water management, access to external markets, modernisation of value chains and distribution, improvement of export strategies, and reforms of the Department of Agriculture and state functions (Akesbi, 2013). Another major instrument is the Agricultural Development Fund, which provides subsidies to individual farms for a wide range of equipment. This fund existed before the GMP, but the GMP considerably increased the amount of the subsidies for investment in drip irrigation, for instance. In 2011, the Agricultural Development Fund paid out subsidies amounting to 2,350 million Moroccan dirhams (approximately 210 million euros) (Akesbi, 2013). In practice, large-scale farmers received the bulk of these payments (Bekkar et al., 2007).

Another major transversal instrument is the reform of the agricultural advisory policy. In 2013, a law was enacted to give agricultural advisors a legal status, which allows them to work in the public administration and in the private sector. A public office was created to coordinate the activities of agricultural advisors in the public sector. Regional plans for agricultural advice were also designed. Most advisory activities were planned to address specific agricultural value chains and aimed to build farmers' capacities for the production of key products within these chains. These advisory activities gave less importance to other farming skills not linked to a specific agricultural product, but important at farm level (e.g., the capacity to plan and monitor farm accounts). In late 2014, this agricultural advisory policy had not yet been implemented.

Discussion

Lack of a concrete definition of several key concepts

The GMP has supported the development of several agricultural value chains. It has increased the income and improved the development prospects of many farms (Sebgui, 2014). However, the GMP failed to provide a concrete definition of farms and did not explain its objectives with regards to the role of farmers in the governance of agricultural value chains, and the way to achieve the sustainable development of rural territories.

Farms

The GMP fails to provide a clear definition of the different types of farms, particularly the characteristics of small-scale farms. In addition, the GMP does not specify what it seeks to achieve at the farm level – it does not define which types of farms should be considered sustainable, how sustainability can be improved, and what 'professionalisation' of farms actually means. In Brazil, in contrast, public policies clearly differentiate farm sizes. These policies are supported by a law defining

the exact characteristics of family farms. In accordance with this law, a farm is considered to be a 'family farm' if the following criteria are met: (i) the farm is smaller than a defined limit; (ii) the work force mainly comprises members of the family; (iii) farming provides the majority of the family income; and (iv) the farm is managed by the family (Silva, 2011). Farms which meet these criteria can benefit from specific state support, like access to credit at low interest rates (Souza Pires, 2013).

Although Pillar II projects theoretically target poor vulnerable farms, the GMP does not provide a definition of exactly what a poor vulnerable farm is. In practice, the DoA provincial offices are under pressure to design Pillar II projects and consequently try to create projects in the different zones under their responsibility. They tend to work with farmers with whom they already have a close relationship. Their limited time and means, and often a lack of motivation, prevent them from becoming involved in marginalized areas where - in addition - farmers lack the ability to interact with the DoA administration. As a result, some farmers involved in Pillar II projects are relatively well-off compared with poorer farmers in the zones in which the projects are being implemented (Faysse et al., unpublished data).

Farmers

The GMP does not consider farmers as fully-fledged actors in the design and implementation of GMP projects, or in the governance of agricultural value chains. Like in other rural development programmes in Morocco, the participation of rural inhabitants is not a priority for the public administration (Montanari and Bergh, 2014). This is in contradiction with the clear call for farmers' participation in decision making formulated in the 2020 Rural Development Strategy and in the Strategy for Agricultural Development published in 2000. Farmers' empowerment and the role that they could play in the governance of agricultural value chains are not mentioned in key GMP documents. The administration only values farmers' participation in GMP projects insofar as it maximizes the chances of a project's success. Between 2008 and 2011, discussions of Pillar II projects took place mainly in DoA offices, and seldom included farmers' organizations. Since 2012, project design procedures call for the participation of farmers' organizations (ADA, 2012). However, farmers are still considered as beneficiaries rather than as full actors in GMP projects. For instance, in the many Pillar II projects involving tree planting, most farmers play no active role during project implementation since a contractor is responsible for all the actions to be implemented. In particular, farmers have no role in monitoring the work carried out by the contractor.

Nevertheless, farmers have been empowered in several Pillar II projects although empowerment is a largely unexpected effect. Between 2008 and 2011, the DoA defined all the core elements of each Pillar II project alone. Nevertheless, farmers who participated in the first wave of projects during this period learned about the procedure used to design Pillar II projects. Later, some farmers submitted their own projects to the DoA and several were accepted (Faysse et al., unpublished data). What is more, even though the official procedure does not assign a prime role to farmers' organisations, some organisations have learned to negotiate with the DoA. In a case reported by Thomas (2013), farmers made proposals which reflected their own interests, but also provided the DoA with satisfactory performance indicators.

The DoA considers aggregation projects as win-win situations. However, it fails to take into account the problem of the division of decision-making power between an aggregator and farmers. In Morocco, there is a long-standing lack of trust between farmers and the agro-firms involved in the

dairy and sugar value chains (Faysse et al., 2010). Farmers often find themselves in a weak position when negotiating with agro-industrialists (Akesbi, 2012; Faysse and Simon, 2014). Pillar I projects pay limited attention to the distribution of added value between the aggregator and farmers. Above all, the DoA did not design mechanisms to monitor the relationship between the aggregator and farmers and to build the capacity of farmers' organizations to negotiate with the aggregator on a level playing field.

Rural territories

The DoA does not provide a concrete definition of the integrated development of rural territories. Consequently, most DoA instruments (e.g., Pillar I and II projects, the Agricultural Development Fund) apply to a specific agricultural value chain and do not take the territorial level into account. This shortcoming is especially prevalent in harsh and/or remote areas (mountains, oases) where farmers generally earn their living by producing different agricultural products on a small scale and through off-farm activities. In these locations, approaches that focus on a single agricultural value chain cannot generate significant income and are consequently unable to produce a wide range of changes (Sebgui, 2014). The DoA became aware of these shortcomings after the first wave of Pillar II projects and created a 'Direction of Mountain Areas and Rural Zones' in 2013, whose aim is to build the DoA's capacity to work at the territorial level.

Moreover, the implementation of the GMP led to the centralisation of decision-making processes during the design stage of each project. Before the GMP, the DoA provincial offices themselves were able to decide to whom certain funds should be attributed. Today, the same provincial offices require ADA approval to obtain funding. The ADA often rejects projects submitted by the provincial DoA offices if they involve fewer than 100 farmers. For instance, it would be difficult to obtain funds to create a single cooperative in a specific value chain (for instance a dairy chain). The underlying rationale is that the GMP should only support projects that 'make a real difference' in a given agricultural value chain. The provincial DoA offices have consequently been disempowered to design local and case-specific development initiatives targeting a small territory.

Consequential outcomes for the implementation of the GMP

Since no concrete definitions were provided for farms, farmers and rural territories, no specific performance indicator was designed to assess the effects of GMP projects at farm and territorial levels. The indicators chosen by the DoA to monitor the GMP implementation (and hence the effectiveness of DoA staff) were less innovative than the actions undertaken. As with past policies, the main indicators of the GMP focus on the number of projects implemented, the investment (e.g., the number of cows attributed or trees planted) and the increases in production (Bekkar et al., 2010). However, the GMP did not design indicators to assess changes in farm income based on increased productive capacities, or farmers' increased ability to play an active role in the governance of agricultural value chains. Similarly, the GMP places emphasis on drip irrigation as a means of saving water. In practice, it focuses on the extent of land equipped with drip irrigation rather than the amount of water saved using drip irrigation systems (Benouniche et al., 2014).

The choice of performance indicators has major consequences for the design of GMP projects. The first consequence concerns the choice of actions to be undertaken. In Pillar II projects focusing on orchard production, the DoA staff gave priority to the planting of seedlings rather than to the

marketing of the resulting apples, mainly because increased production objectives had to be met. In practice, many farmers were able to plant the trees themselves, what they found difficult was marketing their products (Faysse et al., unpublished data; Thomas, 2013). The second consequence concerns the roles given to actors involved in the project implementation. In several Pillar II projects, the performance of contractors responsible for planting and taking care of seedlings was not satisfactory. Farmers often criticised the DoA offices for choosing to work with contractors. They repeatedly claimed that planting the trees themselves and receiving the adequate funding would be more cost effective (Faysse et al., 2014). However, the DoA decided to work with contractors instead of with farmers, based on the assumption that if farmers were responsible for planting the trees, there would be no guarantee that the area to be planted would be respected. By contracting outsiders, the DoA obtained guarantees that the objectives set in the regional agricultural plans for planted areas were fulfilled (Thomas, 2013).

Conclusion

The GMP rationale is that to enable economic growth of the currently dual agricultural sector, increase farmers' incomes, and promote sustainable development, public actions should mainly support investments in agricultural production capacities and in the organization of agricultural value chains. However, two main issues remain incoherent: i) the typology of farms, which was based on the original assessment of the GMP, influences the design of Pillar I and II instruments but is actually not accurate; moreover in practice, the GMP does not take the diversity of farms into account; ii) the goals of increasing farm income and of ensuring sustainable development of rural territories are not translated into practical tools and are not reflected in practical performance indicators.

A key factor that sustains these inaccuracies is the historical strong hold of the Moroccan state over the agricultural sector, which explains why the GMP is a combination of past policies and innovative measures. With the creation of innovative instruments (Pillar I and II projects), the state is trying to convey a more liberal orientation that deliberately avoids interfering in the management of the agricultural value chains. Yet the GMP continues to apply the long standing tradition of state-led management policies, especially when defining production objectives, and the performance indicators closely resemble those used in past policies.

The GMP aims to transform rural areas through improved economic performance. However, due to the inaccuracy of its rationale, its focus is generally on enhancing agricultural production. In particular, it believes that a promising way forward to support small-scale farmers is to strengthen agricultural value chains. In practice, however, the relationship between agricultural value chains and farms has been reversed. During the implementation of the GMP, farms were mainly considered as a way to develop agricultural value chains and to increase agricultural production. Real farms, along with their farmers and with rural territories, faded into the background. These biases may undermine the GMP's ability to achieve wide-ranging improvements at farm, agricultural chain and territorial levels.

The GMP was originally designed mainly by the DoA and a foreign consultancy company. Farmers, academics, and economic actors of agricultural value chains were only marginally consulted (Akesbi, 2011). Today, there is little debate about the different types of farms that exist and the best scenario to ensure their future development. Since the GMP will remain the overarching agricultural policy

until 2020, there is an urgent need for all actors - farmers, value chains, DoA offices, and academics - to think about and discuss the issues at stake. This debate could play a key role in clarifying the GMP rationale and the best way forward to achieve its long-term goals.

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